

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are pending in the present application.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hori (USP 5,847,726) in view of Mizutani (USP 6,078,400). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner alleges that in Hori:

- an ink-jet printer (*printer 101, fig. 6*) is provided with storage means . . . which updates and stores the completion time of the last printing operation (*last/preceding printing operation timing, col. 4, lines 12-18 and col. 9, lines 1-10*);
- wherein, each host machine (*PC 130, fig. 6*) includes print control means (*CPU 31, fig. 6*) for reading out the completion time (*preceding/completion time, col. 9, lines 1-30 and col. 13, lines 28-60*) from the ink-jet printer at the start of a printing operation . . . , obtaining an inactive time . . . by comparing the read out completion time with the current time (*comparing last operation time with current time, fig. 7, col. 9, lines 59-65 and col. 13, lines 28-60*) . . . .

Hori states, in col. 4, lines 11-15, that “Even if the main power supply means of the ink jet printer is frequently rendered ON and OFF, elapsing period starting from the completion timing of the preceding printing operation to the present time is computed by using the clock connected to the uninterruptible power supply.”

With regard to the host computer 130, however, Hori states that “The first time instant memory area 124B . . . is adapted to store therein the preceding or latest purging of flushing timing. The second time instant memory area 124C is adapted to store the present time instant (second time) sent from the clock 35 of the host computer 1 (col. 9, lines 3-8). Hori also states that “in step S119, computation is executed so as to obtain a time elapsing period from the preceding purging timing to the first time instant. Then in step S120, the time elapsing period is compared with a predetermined period (for example 10 days)” (col. 9, lines 61-17).

Therefore, although the ink-jet printer of Hori may be capable of storing the completion timing of the preceding printing operation, such information is used in the first information of Hori and not for the third embodiment relied on by the Examiner.

Further, if the first time instant, shown in Fig. 7, which indicates a time from a preceding purging timing, is modified to indicate a time from a completion timing of the preceding printing operation, the embodiment shown in Fig. 7 would not operate as intended because in the third embodiment, a purging operation is conducted when a predetermined time elapses since the last purging operation, whereas in the first embodiment, the completion timing of the preceding printing operation is merely used to update the first period by rewriting the first period (time from power on) with a second period (present time minus last printing time) (see Fig. 5, steps S14-S18).

Moreover, although Hori states, in col. 13, lines 28-37, that “it is possible to govern the purging operation by the host computer 30,” Hori fails to disclose or suggest that even under this arrangement, the ink-jet printer is “provided with storage means which updates and stores a

completion time of a last printing operation,” as required in claim 1, because the host computer 30 would be required to merely output a purging operation command signal.

The Mizutani reference merely shows an ink-jet printer 3 shared by multiple apparatuses 1-2, as shown in Fig. 1.

In view of this, Applicants respectfully submit that even assuming that Hori and Mizutani can be combined, which Applicants do not admit, Hori in view of Mizutani fails to disclose or suggest a host machine that obtains “an inactive time by comparing the read out completion time” (of a last printing operation) “with the current time,” as recited in claim 1.

Claims 2-18, variously dependent on claim 1, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 1.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

#### Conclusion

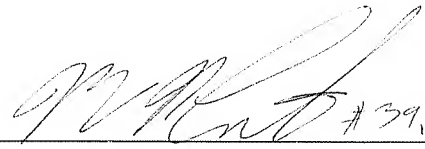
Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and objections, and allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Maki Hatsumi (#40,417) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or to credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By  #39,491  
for Charles Gorenstein  
Registration No.: 29,271  
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP  
8110 Gatehouse Road  
Suite 100 East  
P.O. Box 747  
Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747  
(703) 205-8000  
Attorney for Applicant